

People with IDD Wait To Be Served! Caseload Forecast DDA Services!



Schools Send Children Out-of-State!

In the 2022 legislative session, advocates for children with intellectual/developmental disabilities (IDD) were heard by legislators and included in the Operating budget was a proviso to collect data on school districts sending children to out-of-state residential schools for their education. \$50,000 was included to have the Office of Superintendent of Public Education (OSPI) provide an annual report (*ESSB 5693, Sec. 501 (1)(a) (xiii) Out of state special education services (\$50K)*). OSPI requested that Governor Inslee veto the proviso, which he did!

PROBLEM

Rather than identify and provide support locally, our state sends students with complex conditions out of state - removing them from family and community and potentially creating unsafe situations.

The state's Safety Net funding covers high Individualized Education Program (IEP) costs for students with disabilities. In 2021, 82 percent of Safety Net funding was spent on removing students from local schools and placing them in non-public agencies. Only a fraction of funding was spent on supporting kids in their local school by providing staffing, technical support, or specialized services.

And of the students placed in non-public agencies, 89 were sent out of state in the 2021-22 school year, up from 80 in 2020-21; 58 in 2019-20; and 45 in 2018-19.

Moving someone out of state is extreme - it can mean loss of connection to families who may not be able to travel for visits, and it involves children who may not be able to verbalize or interact over phone or video conferencing. It also typically involves youth with significant disabilities who are particularly vulnerable to abuse when put in isolated settings.

We need data, and thoughtful reflection, on how to support these students in-state, preferably in their communities. Without data, we do children and families grave disservice and can't even begin to try and figure out what is needed here in Washington to prevent painful separations and ensure all youth have access to the support they need. We already know some of the data through Freedom of Information Act requests, so OSPI can track this. They need to report to the Legislature on this issue, so a thoughtful resolution can be found.

SOLUTION

Ensure the Legislature gets at least minimal information about students being sent out of state by requiring the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to collect data and report to the legislature on students with disabilities who are in out-of-state educational placements.

BENEFIT

Tracking out-of-state student data is critical to:

- Strengthen our state's ability to care for its own youth with disabilities
- Carefully monitor and be aware of youth who are no longer in their parent's care

With data, the Legislature can start the work of ensuring local communities have access to supports and providers that schools and kids need. Help school districts, our state, and families figure out what is going on when we send children out of state for years at a time to residential facilities paid for by state special educational dollars.

Direct OSPI to Collect Data on School Districts Sending Children to Out-of-state Residential Schools

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More info:

[Safety Net Survey 2021](#)

[Washington is Shipping More Disabled Students Out of State](#)

